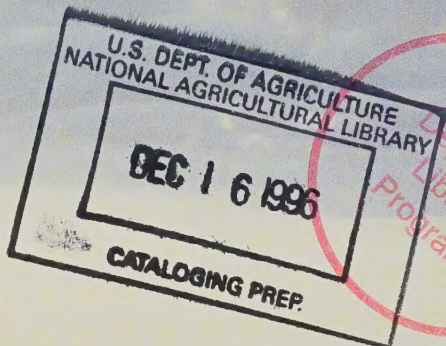


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Rangeland in the Northern Plains comprises 43 percent of the landscape and is nearly one-third of all rangeland in the contiguous United States.

Pastureland is 3 percent of the landscape with 13 million acres privately owned.

The Northern Plains Region's rangeland and pastureland support about:

- 23 million head of cattle, or a quarter of the U.S. cattle population.
- 3 million head of sheep, or a third of the U.S. sheep population.

Using average grazing figures of \$15 per animal unit month (AUM), the value of the forage consumed by cattle and sheep in the region contributes \$2.9 billion to the economy.

Sources: *National Agriculture Statistics Service, 1995.*

America's Northern Plains: An Overview and Assessment of Natural Resources, USDA NRCS, May 1996

1995 South Dakota Farm Real Estate Market Survey.

Conservation of Private Grazing Lands *Important to the Plains Economy*

Grazing land vegetation is a renewable natural resource. Well-managed, privately-owned grazing lands provide many valuable benefits to all citizens.

Economic and Social Stability in Rural America

Properly managed private grazing lands enhance the economic and social stability of rural America. These lands contribute \$250 billion annually to rural economies and \$4.3 billion in local, state, and federal taxes. Private grazing land management and ownership range from small-to large-scale enterprises, young to old, part-time to full-time, and represent a full range of racial, social, and ethnic groups.

Urban Benefits

Private grazing lands provide habitat to two-thirds of our wildlife, water for urban and other users, and visually-appealing open space.

Better and Dependable Water Supplies

Well-managed grazing lands improve or maintain water quality. Healthy stands of vegetation reduce soil erosion and sedimentation. More water is delivered to underground aquifers; flooding frequency and impact are reduced, and cleaner streams are available for fish, wildlife, recreation, and people.

Recreational Opportunities

Grazing land recreational uses have increased significantly. Camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, and other outdoor activities are increasingly popular.

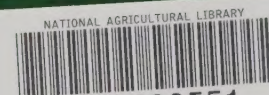
Benefits to the Global Environment

The vegetation and soils on grazing lands are a tremendous reservoir for organic carbon. Properly managed grazing lands help reduce atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide and may reduce greenhouse gas accumulation.

**United States
Department of
Agriculture**



National Agricultural Library



The Northern Plains Region of the Natural Resources Conservation Service has over 160 million acres of private grazing lands - one-third of our Nation's grassland.

Rangeland condition is one way of monitoring grazing lands. Long-term planning and implementation is foremost in meeting farmers' and ranchers' goals.

The future of our grazing lands resources directly relates to the understanding of grasses and their management.



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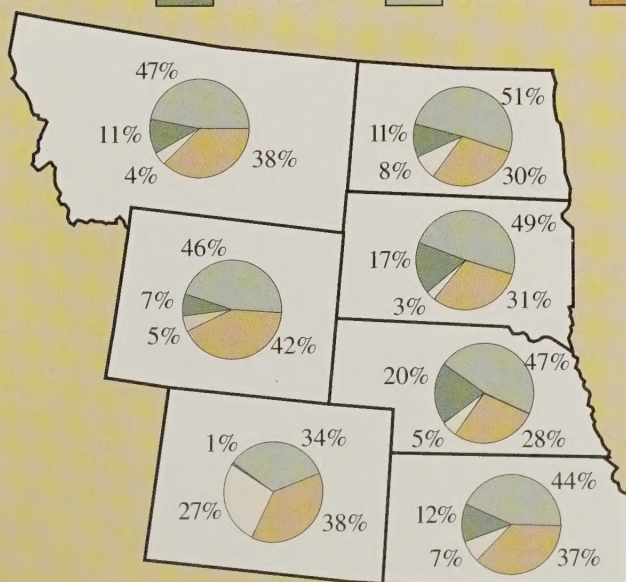
Sources: National Agriculture Statistics Service, 1995.

America's Northern Plains: An Overview and Assessment of Natural Resources, USDA NRCS, May 1996

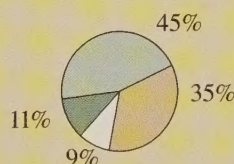
1995 South Dakota Farm Real Estate Market Survey.

Rangeland Condition

Excellent Good Fair Poor



Natural Resources Conservation Service Northern Plains Region



1992 National Resources Inventory
of private, including tribal and trust, rangeland

The Conservation of Private Grazing Lands Program is a voluntary effort to enhance private grazing lands. Many people and groups have become aware of how grazing lands contribute to a healthy environment and economy.

Private grazing lands organizations focus on realizing the full potential of our grazing lands resource. Conservation and livestock production interests are represented on the coalitions, along with federal, state, and local resource agencies.

The Grazing Lands Organizations seek to:

- Strengthen partnerships between producers, conservation entities, and governmental resource agencies.
- Respect and protect private property rights.
- Encourage diversification to achieve multiple land-use benefits.
- Provide grazing lands support and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers on a voluntary basis.
- Emphasize training, education, and increased public awareness.

Private grassland managers use technical and educational assistance to realize their management goals. There are 634 million acres of private grazing lands within the United States; 160 million acres are in the Northern Plains Region. The Conservation of Private Grazing Lands Program is supported with a provision in the 1996 Farm Bill.

Technical assistance is delivered through conservation districts from Natural Resources Conservation Service staff who are specially trained in grazing management. Grazing lands education and research assistance is also available from the Cooperative Extension Service and universities.

To become involved, share your ideas, or for more information about your state's grassland organization, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service for the name of the organization's chairperson in your state.

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Information about national grazing lands issues can be found on the Internet at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service homepage: <http://www.ncg.nrcs.usda.gov>. Also, a national list of Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Coordinators can be found at: <http://www.ncg.nrcs.usda.gov/glti/glcidir.html>.



Produced by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in consultation with grassland organizations.

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